




**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT
FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS**

TEACHING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

SEGMENT #3: LEARNING FORMATS

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Virginia Commonwealth University

The Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute

L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

Richmond, Virginia

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A project administered by

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Professional Development Toolkit for New and Beginning Teachers



The PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS is a research-based video streamed program with accompanying resource documents. The program is an outgrowth of a previous Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) online mentoring study at Virginia Commonwealth University. The findings of the online mentoring study revealed twelve topics new and beginning teachers felt additional university training would have led them to more effective use of best practices in the classroom. In this program, each of the twelve topics is presented in two to six stand alone video segments. The total number of segments is forty five. Suggested uses, in addition to personal viewing by K-12 teachers for self improvement, include professional development, mentor and mentee, university prospective teacher, and small or large group training.

The facilitators are university faculty and practitioners with field experience. Each is currently involved in teacher training or serves as a staff development administrator. All are currently engaged in educational research, teaching and/or educational policy development.

The teachers in the video programs are classroom teachers. Some of them were participants in the 2006 Online Mentoring Study in which the topics for this project were identified. They represent all disciplines in K-12 grades.

Resource documents for the programs are provided as PDF files to facilitate the use of the 45 video segments. The first set of documents is composed of: (1) a description of the project, (2) an introduction to program facilitators, including a definition of each topic, and a list of the video segments, and (3) a research formative study summary that helped to guide the project's development. The second set of documents is composed of: (1) a description of the project, (2) a full text transcript for each video segment, (3) a set of problems and solutions related to each video segment in the form of a work-study guide, and (4) an annotated bibliographic summary of references and Internet links for each transcript. Many of the organizations and agencies referenced in the transcripts are actively involved in the development of video and professional development presentations that support policy and advocacy.

Every reasonable effort is made to present current and accurate information. Internet content, however, does appear, disappear and change over time. CEPI, as a university-based educational policy research institute endorses no specific position of any listed group.

TEACHING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

SEGMENT #3: LEARNING FORMATS

VIDEO SEGMENT TRANSCRIPT

Teaching Strategies and Practices: Teaching methods, strategies and practices required to understand how students differ in the ways they learn; and how to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful.

Facilitator: Dr. [Tammy Milby](#), Reading Faculty
Department of Teaching and Learning
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AUDIO	VIDEO
<p>There are many ways to have students work cooperatively to accomplish learning goals. Students working together cooperatively can have many benefits including (1) active involvement in the development of learning goals, (2) increased motivation, (3) improved time on task, and (4) enhanced overall achievement.</p> <p>Just putting students into groups doesn't mean that they are working well together. There are recommendations and tips to help you build effective interaction into your classroom.</p> <p>Hello. My name is Dr. Tammy Milby. I am on the faculty in the Department of Teaching & Learning at Virginia Commonwealth University. Today, I would like to share some best practices with you on utilizing different learning formats in your own setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a climate and routines which make group work successful. Establish seating configurations, how to get supplies, roles within the group, and signals to bring your students back together.• Keep the size manageable. Groups larger than four are difficult for students to manage. Groups of four can work together as a small group or divide into pairs and then reunite to finish the task. Pairs work well for quick tasks or to discuss a key point during lessons.• Change the groups periodically to decrease cliques and improve student understandings. Different class members will contribute different experiences and strengths to any task.• Successful options might include Jigsaws, Think-pair-share, and Circle of Friends. In a Jigsaw, students form expert teams to review a topic and then regroup to share this information with another group composed of one student from each of the different expert groups. In Think-pair share, the teacher	<p>DR. MILBY</p>

- asks a question, students think alone, and then the pairs join together to discuss the ideas. In Circle of Friends, each student in the group takes a turn to write or speak and the discussion continues to move around the circle until time is called by the teacher.

Remember, students must work together in the 'everyday world'; and building interactive tasks facilitates the problem-solving and thinking skills necessary for their futures.

Two teachers will describe successful forms of cooperative learning they have used in their instruction.

My name is Misty Burton. I am a middle school teacher. This is my first year in the classroom. Choosing the most effective cooperative learning experience is challenging to new and inexperienced teachers. I feel cooperative learning experiences in the classroom among students are as important as cooperative learning experiences for teachers. In the classroom, they must be carefully planned based upon things such as needs, interests, individual and group differences. Cooperative learning experiences may originate from the class or from the desk of the teacher. For example, in some situations, having students pair or group themselves for a specific learning activity can be a good thing. I find that some students are more likely to participate and more inclined to work when they are assigned tasks with friends. As these students become more confident socially, I change group assignments and get them more involved in group activities that enhance overall growth and achievement. Through mobile grouping, I also make certain that each member of the group gets a specific task which may require a supportive or leadership role in the learning process. Much of what is applied in my classroom comes from what I've learned from my shared teaching experiences with colleagues. As teachers, we learn from each other through team teaching activities and other collaborative experiences.

**MISTY
BURTON**

My name is Crystal Heflebower. This is my third year teaching Kindergarten at Ridge Elementary School. I provide my students with ample opportunities to work cooperatively with one another to improve social interaction skills. At times, all of my students are teachers. During certain structured activities, I allow my students to move around and gather information from classmates rather than come to the teacher for assistance. While this may appear to be too "freeflowing" to an outside observer, students know and understand what they are to accomplish. I have found that in order to have successful forms of cooperative learning, I must hold my students accountable for their behavior while they are moving around to work in groups. I do this by either providing a reward to the groups who behave nicely and complete their work on time or just by providing praise. Praise is often all that is needed.

**CRYSTAL
HEFLEBOWER**

In my classroom, students work cooperatively on a daily basis. We have literacy centers every day. We use the centers for students at different levels to work together. My students also meet in flexible guided reading groups in centers once or twice per week depending on need. And by flexible, I mean that these groups change as students' reading ability changes. I also use flexible grouping in math instruction. When it is appropriate for my students to work with a partner or in groups for a math activity, I sometimes allow

them to choose and make decisions. This gives the student ownership and makes the activity more fun. Again, it is important to remember that students should be held accountable for their behavior and their assignments and they must understand that while they are at work in a group, the assigned task must be completed.

Utilizing a variety of formats for learning will increase engagement and improve student motivation. Provide choices and opportunities for students to talk with one another. Cooperative learning is a successful technique for meeting the individual needs of all of your students. Once procedures and expectations are established, group work is easily implemented into any setting.

DR. MILBY



PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Ask yourself: What teaching strategies do you use most often? Why? What other strategies would you like to use to facilitate greater student learning?

Suggested use for this module:

1. Analyze:

Please select one of the scenarios below and problem-solve a list of possible solutions. Record your ideas in the space provided. Discuss these ideas with your other educators (mentor, colleagues, or other beginning teachers).

2. View:

Watch the corresponding video on this topic. How does this information change your ideas?

3. Compare:

Revisit the scenario selected. Next, review the section entitled, "Possible Solutions" comparing the ideas listed with your own list.

4. Reflect:

How will you apply this new information to your current or future classroom? What goal will you set to help you begin to change your practices? What support is needed to help you accomplish this goal?

5. Apply:

List the first step towards change below. Create a timeline for success and place deadlines in your personal planner as a reminder. How will you know when you have met your goals?

Scenarios 1 & 2: Teaching Strategies

Scenario 1

It is time to begin a classroom discussion on the topic that you have been teaching. Although your class is usually quite talkative, the room becomes eerily silent when you try to start the conversations. Students are just looking down, pretending to locate classroom supplies, or writing in their notebooks. How can you best facilitate classroom discussions?

Scenario 2

Your school principal stops by to visit your classroom almost daily. She often glances at your lesson plans or stops to talk with students about what they are working on. Sometimes, she will leave a note of encouragement about something she thinks you are doing well. On your way to lunch, she catches you to mention that she noticed many off-task students during a lecture (15 out of 25 students). She wants you to think about different ways to build learner engagement during instruction.

What teaching techniques could you include in your upcoming lessons to address this issue?

Circle the scenario that you selected below:

Scenario 1

Scenario 2

Record a list of your own possible solutions here:

Summary & Goal Setting:

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Questioning

Good questions are thought-provoking and clear. These questions stimulate student responses and are followed by 3-10 seconds of wait time to allow for processing time. Avoid the use of vague questions or guesses. Instead, include more purposeful prompts which require more than a 'yes' or 'no' response. Great questions will promote critical thinking and get a discussion started easily. For example, a teacher might ask the following higher-level thinking questions for partner or whole-group discussion:

Do you agree with _____?

What ideas could you add to our discussion?

What solutions do you recommend for _____?

How does _____ compare with _____?

What is the main idea of _____?

What do you think about _____?

Engagement:

- Make connections to students' prior knowledge, interests, and learning goals. Use appropriate pop culture, current events, landmarks, and examples within your lessons.
- Read literature aloud to students. Reading aloud piques interest and models vocabulary and eloquent language for students which they can incorporate into their own writing. It is appropriate to incorporate short read selections in any subject area or grade level.
- Incorporate interaction, examples and hands-on learning into your teaching. What manipulatives could you use to teach your lesson?
- Plan stops during lecture or whole-group teaching to refocus student attention. Use a 'think, share, pair' approach to have students tell their neighbors about something they just learned. Try getting feedback on a controversial topic by using 'thumbs up' to agree, 'thumbs down' to disagree, and 'thumbs sideways' to demonstrate a neutral response.
- Generate responses using discussion cubes or by holding up answers on dry erase boards during your lessons.
- Incorporate movement into different activities. Create human timelines or encourage students to move to one of the four corners of the room if they strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, or disagree about a prompt.
- Try inquiry based learning to encourage small groups of students to discover find their own solutions to a problem.
- Include more visuals to help students remember key ideas. Graphic organizers can help learners visualize similarities and differences, compare ideas, determine hierarchies, and recall important facts.

Giving prompt feedback:

Feedback should be specific and focus directly on the work which is being evaluated. Avoid making personal judgments about the personality of the student. Specific feedback on how to improve assignments will improve the quality of the work which is completed. Try providing two to three specific suggestions for improvement rather than using generic terms for feedback (good job or please revise).



ANNOTATED RESERCH BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ❖ Invest in training strategies that provide direct feedback on classroom practice through ongoing consultation, mentoring, or coaching.

Klein, L. G. & Knitzer, J. (2006). *Effective preschool curricula and teaching strategies*. Retrieved September 30, 2007, from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/download_100.pdf

- ❖ Participate in education and training that focuses on how young children grow and learn.

Klein, L. G. & Knitzer, J. (2006). *Effective preschool curricula and teaching strategies*., Retrieved September 30, 2007, from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/download_100.pdf

- ❖ Translate research findings so that parents, teachers, and community leaders can understand whether the differences identified are meaningful and make a difference in children's achievement.

Klein, L. G. & Knitzer, J. (2006). *Effective preschool curricula and teaching strategies*., Retrieved September 30, 2007, from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/download_100.pdf

- ❖ As with other professions, teachers' skills develop and improve over time. Many experts consider differentiated instruction to be a practice only used by veteran teachers, because it involves the "fine motor skills" of teaching, while many novice teachers - preservice teachers and teachers in their first year of teaching - are still trying to master the "gross motor skills" of teaching. Research on novice teachers indicates a focus on classroom management issues, teacher-centered teaching, and instructional planning, not to mention surviving the student teaching or first year experience. This makes it difficult for teachers to focus on differentiating instruction to meet student needs (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Hollingsworth, 1989; Hollingsworth and Lidstone, 1992; Tomlinson, et al, 1994).

Gould, Holly C. (n.d.). Can novice teachers differentiate instruction? Yes, they CAN! Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/differentiated/gould.htm>

- ❖ Fuller and Brown (1975) found that novices proceed through three stages: survival concerns, teaching situation concerns, and pupil concerns. It is in this last stage that novice teachers focus on "concerns about recognizing the social and emotional needs of pupils" (Fuller & Brown, 1975, p. 37) as well as meeting individual instructional needs and fairness to students. This research indicates that novices do not typically attend to student differences in stages one and two.

Gould, Holly C. (n.d.). Can novice teachers differentiate instruction? Yes, they CAN! Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/differentiated/gould.htm>

- ❖ Lidstone and Hollingsworth (1992) conducted a longitudinal study of the first four years of teaching and found three stages of cognitive attention: management focused, subject/pedagogy focused, and student learning focused. Novice teachers begin with "rote knowledge of pedagogy." This is when the novice recognizes the concept but does not use it, uses it poorly, or has a superficial understanding of why it is worth using. The next stage involves routine processing. Now the new teacher applies the technique but only superficially and in specific contexts. The final stage is comprehensive knowledge

when the teachers' beliefs are integrated with teaching performance, concepts are understood and applied across contexts, and they have cognitive space available for attending to student needs. While it is clear that novices have knowledge of pedagogy at the beginning stages of their teacher development, the implication is that novices can only begin to differentiate for varying student needs after four years of teaching

Gould, Holly C. (n.d.). Can novice teachers differentiate instruction? Yes, they CAN! Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/differentiated/gould.htm>

- ❖ When it comes to differentiating to meet student needs, Tomlinson et al. (1994) found that novice teachers did recognize differences among students but found it difficult to be responsive to those differences. Novices were unclear about the meaning of differentiation and did not know how to translate it into classroom practice. Other factors found to inhibit novices from differentiating included the lack of emphasis on differentiated instruction by cooperating teachers, principals, college supervisors, and college professors. This lack of emphasis continues to perpetuate the current "one-size-fits-all" method of teaching prevalent in so many schools today. Because schools continue to become increasingly diverse, differentiation needs to become a focus early in the novices' experience because, as they will soon discover, one size does not fit all.

Gould, Holly C. (n.d.). Can novice teachers differentiate instruction? Yes, they CAN! Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/differentiated/gould.htm>

- ❖ Teacher colleagues help us see that teaching for understanding in a concerted and committed way calls for a depth of technique that most teachers' initial training and ensuing experiences have not provided. Thinking of instruction in terms of performances of understanding, arranging ongoing assessment, tapping the potential of powerful representations--these have a very limited presence in preservice and in-service teacher development. So a second strand of any effort to make a pedagogy of understanding real must be to help teachers acquire such techniques

Perkins, David. (1993). *Teaching for understanding*. Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.exploratorium.edu/IFI/resources/workshops/teachingforunderstanding.html>

- ❖ Effective staff development prepares teachers to use research-based teaching strategies appropriate to their instructional objectives and their students.

Killion, Joellen. (2000). *Explore research to identify best instructional strategies*. Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.aypf.org/publications/EssentialsofHighSchoolReform.pdf>

- ❖ Examining instructional strategies appropriate to specific content areas, developmental stages of students, and applicable to learning outcomes is a crucial decision teachers make as they design lessons.

Killion, Joellen. (2000). *Explore research to identify best instructional strategies*. Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.aypf.org/publications/EssentialsofHighSchoolReform.pdf>

- ❖ In today's standards-based classrooms, many strategies that worked best a few years ago tend to isolate knowledge and skills rather than promote application and integration across content areas.

Killion, Joellen. (2000). *Explore research to identify best instructional strategies*. Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.aypf.org/publications/EssentialsofHighSchoolReform.pdf>

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